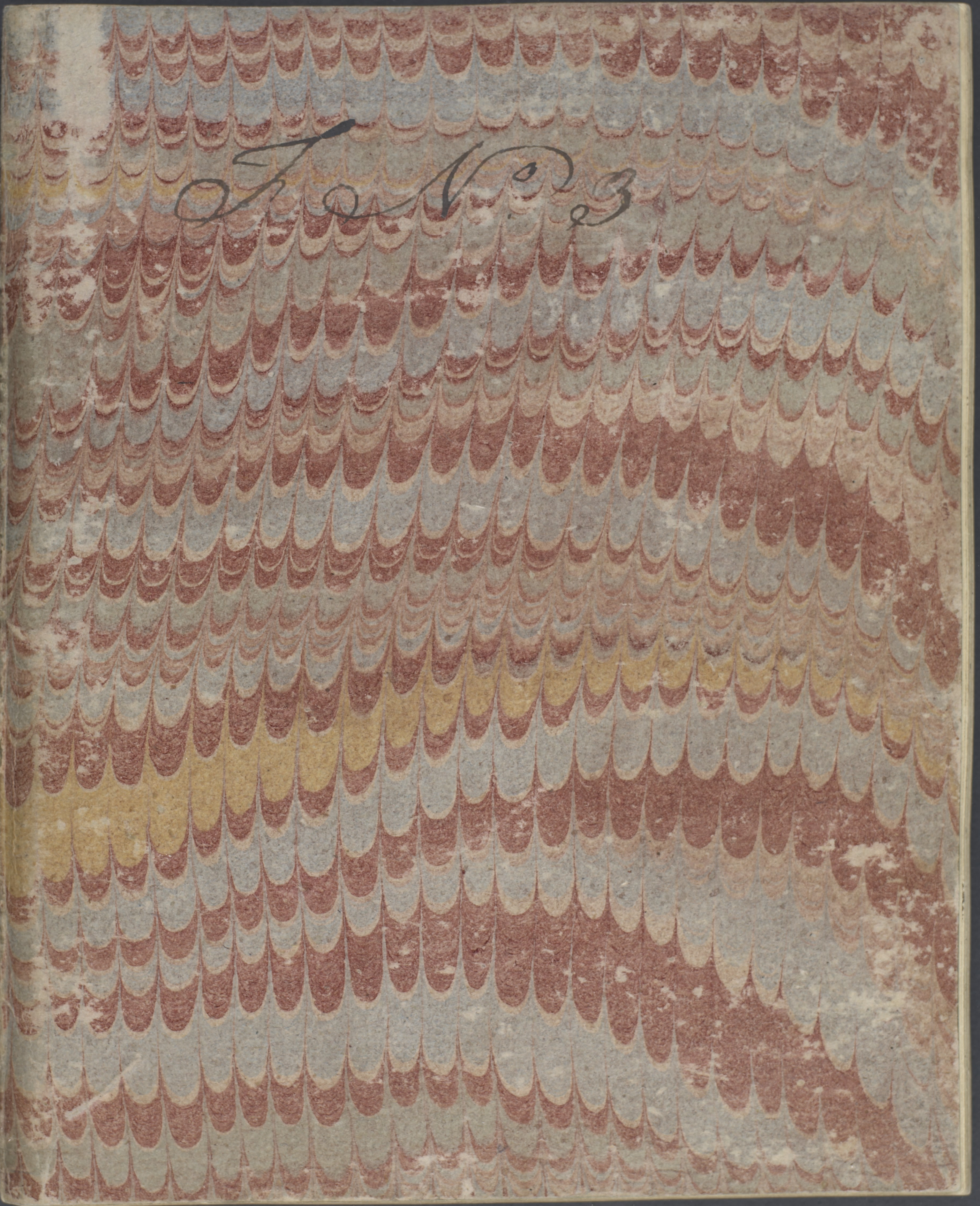

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L5. In every period of our Existence, in every Situation, in which we can be placed, much is to be *known*, much is to be *done*, much is to be *enjoyed*. But all that is to be known, all that is to be done, all that is to be enjoyed, depends upon the proper Exertion & Direction of our numerous Powers. In this immense Ocean of Intelligence & Action, are we left without a Compaſs & without a Chart? Is there no *Pole-Star*, by which we may regulate our Course? Has the all-gracious & all-wise Author of our existence formed us for such great & such good Ends; & has he left us without a Conductor to lead us in the Way, by which those Ends may be attained? Has he made us capable of observing a Rule? – And has he furnished us with no Rule, which we ought to observe? Let us examine these questions – for they are important

tant ones — with Patience & with Attention, Our Labours will, in all Probability, be amply repaid. We shall probably find that to direct the *more important* Parts of our Conduct, the bountiful Governo*r of the Universe has been graciously pleased to *provide* us with a Law; & that, to direct the *leſs important* Parts of it, he has made us *capable* of providing a Law *for ourselves*.

That our Creator has a supreme Right to prescribe a Law for our Conduct: And that we are under the most perfect Obligation to obey that Law — are truths established on the clearest & most solid Principles.

In the Course of our Remarks on that Part of *Sir William Blackstone's* Definition of Law, which includes the Idea of a *Superior* as eſsential to it, we marked with particular Care, that it was only with Regard to *human Laws* that we controverted the

Justneſs

Justneſs or Propriety of that Idea. It was incumbent on us to mark this Distinction particularly; for with Regard to Laws which are divine, they truly come from a Superio~~u~~r — from him who is supreme.

Between Beings, who, in their Nature, Powers and Situation, are so perfectly equal, that Nothing can be ascribed to one, which is not applicable to the other; there can be neither Superiority nor Dependence. With regard to such Beings, no Reason can be aſsigned why any one should aſsume Authority over others, which may not, with equal Propriety, be aſsigned, why each of those others should aſsume Authority over that one. To constitute Superiority & Dependence, there must be an eſsential Difference of Qualities, on which those Relations may be founded.

Some allege, that the sole Superiority of

Strength

Strength, or as they express it, an irresistable power is the true Foundation of the Right of prescribing Laws. "This Superiority "of Power gives," say they, "a Right of reigning, "by the Impossibility, in which it places others, "of resisting him, who has so great an Advantage over them".

Others derive the Right of prescribing Laws & imposing Obligations from superior Excellence of Nature. "This", say they, "not only renders a Being independent of those, "who are of a Nature inferio~~u~~r to it; but "leads us to believe that the latter was made "for the Sake of the former." For a proof of this they appeal to the Constitution of Man. —"Here", they tell us, "the Soul governs, as being "the noblest Part. On the same Foundation", they add, "the Empire of Man over "the Brute Creation is built".

Others, again, say, that, properly speaking, there is only one general Source of

"Superiority

"Superiority and Obligation. God is our
"Creator: In him we live, & move, & have our
"Being: From him we have received our
"intellectual & our moral Powers: He, as
"Master of his own Work* can prescribe
"to it whatever Rules to him shall seem
"meet. Hence our Dependence on our
"Creator; Hence his absolute Power over
"us: This is the true Source of all Authority.

With Regard to the first Hypothesis, it is totally insufficient; nay, it is absolutely false. Because I cannot resist; am I obliged to obey? Because another is poſseſsed of superio*r Force; am I bound to acknowledge his Will as the Rule of my Conduct? Every Obligation supposes Motives that influence the Conscience & determine the Will, so that we should think it wrong not to obey, even if Resistance was in our Power. But a Person, who alleges only the Law of the strongest, proposes no Motive to influence the Conscience or to

determine

determine the Will. Superior Force may reside with predominant Malevolence. Has Force, exerted for the ~~Paſsions~~ Purposes of Malevolence, a Right to command? Can it impose an obligation to obey? No. Resistance to such Force is a Right; & if Resistance can prove effectual, it is a Duty also. On some Occasions, all our Efforts may, indeed, be useleſs; and an Attempt to resist would frustrate its own Aim: But, on such Occasions, the Exercise of Resistance only is suspended; the Right of Resistance is not extinguished: We may continue, for a time, under a *Constraint*; but we come not under an *Obligation*: We may suffer all the external Effects of *superior Force*; but we feel not the internal Influence of *superior Authority*.

The second Hypothesis has in it something plausible; but on Examination, it will not be found to be accurate. Wherever a Being of superior Excellence is found, his Excellence, as well as every other Truth, ought, on

proper

proper Occasions, to be *acknowledged*; we will go further; it ought, as every thing excellent ought, to be *esteemed*. But must we go farther still? Is Obedience the neceſsary Consequence of honest Acknowledgment & just Esteem? Here we must make a Pause — we must make some Enquiries before we go forward. In what Manner is this Being of superior Excellence connected with us? What are his Dispositions with Regard to us? By what Effects, if by *any*, will his superior Excellence be displayed? Will it be exerted for our Happineſs; or, as to us, will it not be exerted at all? We acknowledge — we esteem Excellence; but 'till these Questions are answered, we feel not ourselves under an Obligation
v. to *obey* it. If the Opinion of *Epicurus* concerning his Divinities — that they were absolutely indifferent to the Happineſs & Interests of Men — was admitted for a Moment; the Inference would unquestionably be — that they were not entitled to human Obedience. They

The third Hypothesis contains a solemn Truth; which ought to be examined with Reverence and Awe. It resolves the supreme Right of presribing Laws for our Conduct, & our indispensible Duty of obeying those Laws, unto the omnipotence of the Divinity. This Omnipotence let us humbly adore. Were we to suppose — but the Supposition cannot be made — that infinite *Goodneſs* could be disjoined from almighty Power — but we cannot — must not proceed to the Inference: No — it never can be drawn; for from Almighty Power infinite Goodneſs can never be disjoined.

Let us join in our weak *Conceptions* what are inseparable in their *incomprehensible Archetype* — *infinite Power* — *infinite Wisdom* — *infinite Goodneſs*; & then we shall see, in it's resplendent Glory, the *supreme Right* to *rule*: We shall feel, the conscious Sense of the *perfect Obligation* to *obey*.

His infinite Power enforces his Laws, & carries

ries them into full and effectual Execution. His infinite Wisdom knows and chuses the fittest means for accomplishing the Ends which he proposes. His infinite Goodneſs proposes such Ends only as promote our Felicity. By his Power, he is able to remove whatever may poſsibly injure us, and to provide whatever is conducive to our Happineſs. By his Wisdom, he knows our Nature, our Faculties and our Interests: He cannot be mistaken in the Designs, which he proposes, nor in the Means, which he employs to accomplish them. By his Goodneſs, he proposes our Happineſs; and to that End directs the Operations of his Power & Wisdom.

Indeed, to his Goodneſs alone we may trace the Principle of his Laws. Being infinitely and eternally happy in himself, his Goodneſs alone could move him to create us, & give us the Means of Happineſs. The same Principle, that moved his *creating*, moves

his

his *governing* Power. The Rule of his Government we shall find to be reduced to this one paternal Command — Let Man pursue his own Perfection and Happineſs.

What an enrapturing View of the moral Government of the Universe! Over all Goodneſs infinite reigns, guided by unerring Wisdom, & supported by Almighty Power.

What an instructive Leſson to those, who think, and are encouraged by their Flatterers to think, that a Portion of divine Right is communicated to their Rule. If this really was the Case; their Power ought to be subservient to their Goodneſs, and their Goodneſs should be employed in promoting the Happineſs of those, who are entrusted to their Care. But Princes, & the Flatterers of Princes, are guilty, in two Respects, of the groſsest Error & Presumption. They claim to govern by divine Institution and Right. The Principles of their Government

ment are repugnant to the Principles of that Government, which is divine. The Principle of the divine Government is Goodneſs: They plume themselves with the gaudy Insignia of Power.

Well might Nature's Poet say,—

— Could great Men thunder,
As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet,
For every pelting, petty Officer
Would use his Heaven for Thunder;
Nothing but Thunder. Merciful Heaven!
Thou rather with thy sharp & sulphurous Bolt
Split'st the unwedgeable & gnarled Oak,
Than the soft Myrtle: O, but Man, proud Man,
Dreſsed in a little brief Authority
Most ignorant of what he's most aſsured,
His glaſsy Substance; like an angry Ape,
Plays such fantastic Tricks before high Heaven,
As make the Angels weep.

Where a supreme Right to give Laws exists, on one Side; & a perfect Obligation to obey

obey them exists, on the other Side; this Relation, of itself, suggests the Probability that Laws *will* be made.

When we view the inanimate & irrational Creation around & above us, & contemplate the beautiful Order observed in all it's Motions & Appearances; is not the Supposition unnatural and improbable — that the rational and moral World should be abandoned to the Frolics of Chance, or to the Ravage of Disorder? What would be the fate of Man and of Society, was every one at full Liberty to do as he listed, without any fixed Rule or Principle of Conduct, without an Helm to steer him — a Sport of the fierce Gusts of Paſsion, & the fluctuating Billows of Caprice?

To be without Law is not agreeable to our Nature; because, if we were without Law, we should find many of our

Talents

Talents and Powers hanging upon us like uſeleſs Incumbrances. Why should we be illuminated by Reason, were we only made to obey the Impulse of irrational Instinct? Why should we have the Power of deliberating, & of balancing our Determinations, if we were made to yield implicitly & unavoidably to the Influence of the first Impreſsions? Of what Service to us would Reflection be, if, after Reflection, we were to be carried away irresistibly by the Force of blind & impetuous Appetites.

Without Laws, what would be the State of Society? The more ingenious & artful the two-legged Animal Man is, the more dangerous he would become to his Equals: His Ingenuity would degenerate into Cunning: And his Art ~~would~~ would be employed for the Purposes of Malice. He would be deprived of all the Benefits & Pleasures of peaceful & social life: He would become a Prey to all the Distractions of Licentiouſneſs & War.

Is it probable – we repeat the Question – is it probable that the Creator, infinitely wise and good, would leave his *moral* World in this *Chaos* & *Disorder*?

If we enter into ourselves, & view with Attention what~~ever~~ passes in our own Breasts – ~~If we open our Ears, & listen to the Voice of the Monitor within us~~; we shall find that what, at first, appeared *probable*, is proved, on closer Examination, to be *certain*; we shall find that *God* has not left *himself* without a *Witness*, nor *us* without a *Guide*.

We have already observed, that concerning the Nature and Cause of Obligation many different Opinions have been entertained, and much ingenious Disputation has been held by Philosophers and Writers on Jurisprudence. It will not be improper to take a Summary View of these Opinions

Some

Some Philosophers maintain, that all Obligation arises from the Relations of Things; from a certain Proportion or Disproportion, a certain Fitneſs or Unfitneſs between Objects and Actions, which give a Beauty to some, and a Deformity to others. They say that the Rules of Morality are founded on the Nature of Things; and are agreeable to the Order neceſsary for the Beauty of the Universe.

Others allege, that every Rule whatever of human Actions carries with it a moral Neceſsity of conforming to it; and consequently produces a Sort of Obligation. Every Rule, say they, implies a Design, and the Will of attaining a certain End. He, therefore, who proposes a particular End,

and

and knows the Rule by which alone he can accomplish it, finds himself under a moral Neceſsity of observing that Rule. If he did not observe it, he would act a contradictory Part; he would propose the End, and neglect the only Means, by which he could obtain it. There is a reasonable Neceſsity, therefore, to prefer one Manner of acting before another; and every reasonable Man finds himself engaged to this, and prevented from acting in a contrary Manner. In other Words, he is obliged; for Obligation is Nothing more than a Restriction of Liberty produced by Reason. Reason, then, independent of Law, is sufficient to impose some

Obligation

Obligation on Man; and to establish a System of Morality and Duty.

But, according to others, the Idea of Obligation necessarily implies a Being, who obliges, and must be distinct from him, who is obliged. If the Person, on whom the Obligation is imposed, is the same as he who imposes it; he can disengage himself from it whenever he pleases; or rather, there is no Obligation. Obligation and Duty depend on the Intervention of a Superior, whose Will is manifested by Law. If we abstract from all Law, and consequently from a Legislator, we shall have no such Thing as Right, Obligation, Duty or Morality.

Others, again, think it necessary to join the last two Principles together, in

in order to render the Obligation perfect. Reason, say they, is the first Rule of Man, the first Principle of Morality, and the immediate Cause of all primitive Obligation. But Man being necessarily dependent on his Creator, who has formed him with Wisdom and Design, and who, in creating him, has proposed some particular Ends; the Will of God is another Rule of human Actions, another Principle of Morality, Obligation and Duty.

On this Distinction, the Kinds of Obligation, external and internal, are founded. These two Principles must be united in order to form a complete System of Morality, really founded

on

on the Nature and State of Man. As a rational Being, he is subject to Reason: As a Creature of God, to his supreme Will. Thus Reason and the divine Will are perfectly reconciled, are naturally connected, and are strengthened by their Junction.

The Cause of Obligation is laid, by some Philosophers in Utility. Actions, they tell us, are to be estimated by their Tendency to promote Happiness. Whatever is expedient, is right. It is the Utility, alone, of any moral Rule, which constitutes its Obligation.

Congenial with this Principle, is another, which has received the Sanction of some Writers – that Sociability, or the Care of maintaining Society properly, is the

the Fountain of Obligation and Right: For to every Right there must be a corresponding Obligation. From this Principle the Inference is drawn, that every one is born, not for himself alone, but for the whole human Kind.

Further – many Philosophers derive our Obligation to observe the Law of Nature from instinctive affections, or an innate moral Sense This is the Sense, they tell us, by which we perceive the Qualities of Right, and Wrong, and the other moral Qualities in Actions

You

It appears then —
You are, by this time, fully sensible that, with Regard both to the Meaning and the Cause of *Obligation*, much Diversity of Sentiment, much Ambiguity & much Obscurity have prevailed. It is a Subject of Enquiry, however, that well deserves to be investigated, explained, illustrated and placed in it's native Splendor & Dignity. In order to do this, it will be proper to ascertain the precise State of the Question before us. It is this — What is the efficient ~~and productive~~ Cause of *moral* Obligation? — of the eminent Distinction between *Right* & *Wrong*? This has been often & injudiciously blended with another Question, connected indeed with it, but from which it ought to be preserved separate & distinct. That other Question is — How shall we, in particular Instances, learn the Dictates of our Duty, & make, with Accuracy

curacy, the eminent Distinction, which we have just now mentioned? The first Question points to the Principle of Obligation: The second points to the Means, by which our Obligation to perform specified Actions, or a Series of specified Actions, may be deduced. The first has been called by Philosophers - Principium essendi - the Principle of Existence: the Principle, which constitutes Obligation. The second has been called by them - Principium cognoscendi - the Principle of knowing it - the Principle, by which it may be proved or perceived. In a Commonwealth, the Distinction between these two Questions is familiar & easy. If the Question is put - What is the efficient & productive Cause of the Obligation upon the Citizens to obey the Laws of the State? the Answer is ready - the Authors, by whom Authority the Laws are made. ~~thority &~~ Will of ~~the Legislature~~. If the Question is put - How shall we, in a parti=

V.

particular Instance, or in a Series of particular Instances, ascertain the Laws, which the Citizens ought to obey — Reference is immediately made to the Code of Laws.

v. ~~L6.~~ Having thus stated the Question — What is the efficient ~~[illegible]~~ Cause of moral Obligation? — I give it this Answer — The ~~Authority~~ & Will of God. This is the supreme Law. ~~[illegible]~~ His just & full Right of imposing Laws; & our Duty in obeying them; are the sources of our moral Obligations. ~~The obliging Power or the Life & Soul of every Law [illegible]~~. If I am asked — why do you obey the Will of God? I answer — because it is my Duty so to do. If I am asked again — how do you know this to be your Duty? I answer again — because I am told so by my moral Sense or Conscience. If I am asked a third time — how do

do you know that you ought to do that, of which your Conscience enjoins the Performance? I can only say I *feel* that such is my Duty. Here ~~the~~ Investigation must stop; ~~for~~ Reasoning can go no further. The Science of Morals as well as other Sciences, is founded on Truths, that cannot be discovered or proved by Reasoning. Reason is confined to the Investigation of unknown Truths by the Means of ~~those which~~ such as are known. We cannot, therefore, *begin* to reason, till we are furnished otherwise than by Reason with some Truths, on which we can found our Arguments. Even in Mathematics, we must be provided with Axioms perceived intuitively to be true, before our Demonstrations can commence. Morality, like Mathematics, has its intuitive Truths, without which we cannot make a single Step in our Reasonings

ings

ings upon the Subject. ~~We rely more upon *intuitive* knowledge than upon the strictest Reasoning.~~

~~Quæ est Gens, aut quod genus hominum, quod non habeat sine doctrina anticipationem quandam, id est, anticeptam animo rei quandam informationem, sine qua nec intelligi quidquam, nec quæri, nec disputari potest.~~

Such an intuitive Truth is that, with which we just now closed our Investigation. If a person was not poſseſsed of the *Feeling* before mentioned, it would not be in the Power of Arguments to give him any Conception of the Distinction between right & wrong: These Terms would be to him equally unintelligible as the Term *Colour* to one who was born & has continued blind. But that there is, in human Nature, such a moral Principle, has been felt & acknowledged in all Ages & Nations.

Now that we have stated & answered the first Question; let us proceed to the Consideration of the second – How shall we, in particular Instances, learn the Dictates of our Duty, & make, with accuracy, the proper Distinction between Right & Wrong – in other Words – how shall we, in particular Cases, discover the Will of God? We discover it by our Conscience, by our Reason, & by the holy Scriptures. The Law of Nature & the Law of Revelation are both divine: They flow, tho' in different Channels, from the same adorable Source. It is, indeed, preposterous to separate them from each other. The Object of both is – to discover the Will of God – & both are neceſsary for the Accomplishment of that End.

1. The ~~Faculty~~ Power of moral Perception is indeed a most important Part of our Constitution. It is an original Power ~~the Sense of Duty, Conscience,~~

~~the~~

~~[illegible]~~ a Power ~~[illegible]~~ of it's *own kind*; & totally distinct from the ~~[illegible]~~ Ideas of *Utility* & *Agreeableneſs*. ~~[illegible]~~. By that Power we have Conceptions ~~[illegible]~~ of *Merit* & *Demerit*, of *Duty* and *moral Obligation*, ~~[illegible]~~. By that ~~same~~ Power, we perceive some things in human Conduct to be *right*, & others to be *wrong*. ~~[illegible]~~. We have the ſame *Reason* to rely on ~~[illegible]~~ the Dictates of this Faculty, as upon the Determinations of our Senses, or of our other natural ~~[illegible]~~ Powers. When an Action is represented to us, flowing from *Love*, *Humanity*, *Gratitude*, an *ultimate Desire* of the Good of others; though it happened in a Country far distant, or in an Age long past, we admire the lovely ~~[illegible]~~ Exhibition, & praise it's Author. The contrary

Conduct

v

Conduct, when represented to us, raises our Abhorrence & Aversion. But whence this *secret Chain* betwixt *each Person* and *Mankind*? If there is no *moral Sense*, which makes benevolence ~~Actions~~ appear *beautiful*; if all Approbation be from the *Interest* of the Approver;

What's *Hecuba* to us, or we to *Hecuba*?

The Mind, which reflects on itself & is a Spectator of other Minds, sees & feels the *soft* & the *harsh*, the *agreeable* & the *disagreeable*, the *foul* & the *fair*, the *harmonious* and the *dissonant* as really & truly in the *Affections* & *Actions*, as in any musical Numbers, or the outward forms or Representati~~ti~~ons of *sensible Things*. ~~Nor~~ It can not ~~it~~ withhold its Approbation or Aversion in what relates to the former any more than in what relates to the latter of those Subjects. To deny the Sense of a sublime & beautiful & of their contraries in Actions & Things will appear an Affectation

merely

merely to one who duly considers & traces the ~~Matter~~ Subject. Even he who indulges this Affectation cannot avoid the Discovery of those very Sentiments, which he pretends not to feel. A Lucretius or an Hobbes, ~~[illegible]~~ cannot discard the Sentiments of Praise & Admiration respecting some moral Forms; nor the Sentiments of Censure & Detestation concerning others. Has ~~he~~ a Man *Gratitude*, or *Resentment*, or *Pride*, or *Shame*? If he has and avows it; he must have & acknowledge a Sense of something *benevolent*, of something *unjust*, of something *worthy*, & of something *mean*. Thus so long as we find Men pleased or angry, proud or ashamed; we may appeal to the Reality of the moral Sense. A Right & a Wrong, an honourable & a dishonourable is plainly conceived. About these there may be mistakes, but this destroys not the Inference – that the Things are, & are universally acknowledged

ledged – that they are of Nature's Impression; & by no Art can be obliterated.

This Sense or Apprehension of Right & Wrong, appears *early* & exists in different Degrees. The Qualities of Love, Gratitude, Sympathy unfold themselves in the first Stages of Life, & the Approbation of those Qualities accompanies the first Dawn of Reflexion. Young ~~Minds~~ People, who think the least about the distant Influences of Actions, are, more than others, moved with *moral Forms*. Hence that strong Inclination in Children to hear such Stories as paint the Characters & Fortunes of Men. Hence that Joy in the Prosperity of the kind & faithful, & that Sorrow upon the Success of the treacherous & cruel, with which we often see infant Minds strongly agitated. ~~This Sense is a first Principle in our Constitution; & there is no speculative Opinion or Belief that can immediately or directly exclude or extinguish it. That which is of original~~

and

~~& pure Nature, Nothing but a contrary Habit or Custom— a second Nature, is able to displace. This *Affection* being an original one, of earliest Rise in the Soul, Nothing but a contrary Affection, by frequent Check & Control, can operate upon it, so as either to diminish or destroy it.~~

There is a natural Beauty in Figures; and is there not a Beauty as natural in Actions? When the Eye opens upon *Forms* and the Ear to *Sounds*; the beautiful is seen, & Harmony is heard & acknowledged. When Actions are viewed & Affections are discerned, the inward eye distinguishes the beautiful, the amiable, the admirable, from the despicable, the odious & the deformed. How is it poſsible not to own, that as *these* Distinctions have their Foundation in Nature, so *this* Power of discerning them is natural also?

The

The Universality of an Opinion or Sentiment may be evinced by the Structure of Languages. Languages were not invented by Philosophers to countenance or support any artificial System. They were contrived by Men in general to expreſs common Sentiments & Perceptions. The Inference is satisfactory;* that where all Languages make a Distinction, there must be a similar Distinction, in universal Opinion or Sentiment. For Language is the Picture of human Thoughts; & from this faithful Picture we may draw certain Conclusions concerning the Original. Now; an universal Effect must have an universal Cause. No universal Cause can, with Propriety, be aſsigned for this universal Opinion, except that intuitive Perception of Things which is distinguished by the Name of Common Sense.

All

All Languages speak of a beautiful & a deformed, a right & a wrong, an agreeable & disagreeable, a good & ill, in Actions, Affections & Characters. All Languages, therefore, suppose a moral Sense, by which those Qualities are perceived & distinguished

The whole Circle of the Arts of Imitation ~~Arts~~ proves the Reality of the moral Sense. They suppose, in human Conduct, a Sublimity, a Beauty, a Greatneſs, an Excellence, independent of Advantage or Disadvantage, Profit or Loſs. If we were divested of moral Sensibility; the fine & imitative Arts would not produce in us the best Half of their agreeable Effects. On him whose Heart is indelicate or hard: on him who has no Admiration of what is truly noble; on him who has no sympathetic Sense of what is melting and tender, the highest Beauty

of

of ~~Poetry & Eloquence~~ the mimic Arts must make, indeed, but a very faint & transient Impression. If we were void of a relish for moral ~~Beauty~~ Excellence; how frigid & uninteresting would the finest Descriptions of Life & Manners appear! How indifferent are the finest Strains of Harmony to him, who has not a musical Ear!—The Force of the moral Sense is diffused thro' every Part of Life. The Luxury of the Table derives it's principal Charms from some Mixture of moral Enjoyments, from communicating Pleasures, & from Sentiments honourable & just as well as elegant—

"The Feast of Reason, & the Flow of Soul."

The chief Pleasures of History & Poetry & Eloquence ~~[illegible]~~ are derived from the same Source. ~~[illegible]~~ and Music, and Sculpture & Painting; Beside the Pleasures they afford by Imitation, they receive ~~[illegible]~~ a stronger Charm from something moral insinuated

ated into the Performances. The ~~chief~~ principal Beauties of Behaviour and even of Countenance, arise from the Indication of ~~[illegible]~~ Affections, or Qualities morally estimable.

Never was there any of the human Species above the Condition of an Idiot, to whom all Actions appeared indifferent. ~~Moral Distinctions are as universal as [illegible]~~ All feel that a certain Temper, certain Affections & certain Actions produce a Sentiment of Approbation; & that a Sentiment of Diſapprobation is produced by the contrary Temper, Affections & Actions. ~~If a man would say, with Sincerity, that he is conscious of no Obligation to consult his own Happineſs, to be faithful to his Engagements, to obey his Maker, to injure no Man; I know not what Reasoning either probable or demonstrative, could be used to convince him of any~~

moral

moral Duty. As we cannot reason in Mathematics, with a man, who denies the Axioms; as little can we reason with a man in Morality who denies the first Principles of Morals. He who does not, by the Light of his own Mind, percieve some Things in Conduct to be Right & others to be wrong, is as incapable of Reasoning about Morals, as a ~~blind~~ deaf Man about ~~Colours~~ Sounds. Such a Man, if any such Man ever was, would be no moral Agent, nor capable of any moral Obligation.

This Power is capable of Culture and Improvement by Habit & by frequent and extensive Exercise. ~~Our Taste for Virtue encreases by Exercise; & Habits make it still more pleasant. It may be cultivated to a high Degree of Refinement~~. An high Sense of moral Excellence is approved above all other intellectual Talents. This high

Sense

Sense of Excellence is accompanied with a strong Desire after it ~~[illegible]~~, & a keen Relish for it, ~~[illegible]~~. This Desire and this Relish are approved as the most amiable Affections, & the highest Virtues.

This moral Sense, from it's very Nature, is intended to regulate & control all our other Powers. It governs our Paſsions as well as our Actions. Other Principles may solicit & allure; but the Conscience aſsumes Authority, & must be obeyed. Of this Dignity & commanding Nature we are immediately conscious, as we are of the Power itself. ~~Matters of such immediate Feeling can be established only by an Appeal to what paſses within us.~~ It estimates what it enjoins, not merely as superior in Degree, but as superior likewise in Kind to what is recommended by our other perceptive Powers.

Without this controling Faculty, endowed as we are with such a Variety of Senses, & ~~[illegible]~~ interfering Desires ~~frequently interfering with one another~~, we would appear a ~~confused~~ Fabrick, destitute of Order: ~~and of regular Arrangement~~: But possessed of it, all our Powers may be harmonious & consistent; they may all combine in one uniform & ~~straight~~ regular Direction.

In short; If we had not the Faculty of perceiving certain Things in Conduct to be right, & others to be wrong, ~~which we are immediately~~; & of perceiving our Obligation to do what is right, & not to do what is wrong; we would not be moral & accountable Beings.

If we be as, I hope I have shewn we are, endowed with ~~such a~~ this Faculty; there must be some Things, which are immediately discerned by it to be right, & others to be wrong: There must, consequent-

ly. be in Morals, as in other Sciences, *first Principles* which derive not their Evidence from any antecedent Principles, but which may be said to be intuitively discerned.

Moral Truths may be divided into two Classes, such as are self-evident, & such as, from the self-evident ones, are deduced by Reasoning. If the first be not discerned without Reasoning; Reasoning can never discern the last, ~~For some first Principles of Morals must be immediately discerned, otherwise we have no Foundation, on which others can rest, or from which we can reason. The Evidence of the fundamental Principles of Morals is *intuitive*.~~

The Cases that require Reasoning are few compared with those that require none; & a Man may be very honest &

virtuous, who cannot reason, & who knows not what Demonstration means.

If the Rules of Virtue were left to be discovered by Reasoning, even by demonstrative Reasoning, unhappy would be the Condition of the far greater Part of Men, who have not the Means of cultivating the Power of Reasoning to any high Degree. As Virtue is the buſineſs of all Men, the first Principles of it are written ~~in~~ on their Hearts, in Characters so legible, that no Man can pretend Ignorance of them, or of his Obligation to practise them. Reason even with Experience, is too often overpowered by ~~seldom a weighty match against~~ Paſsion; To restrain ~~its~~ whose Impetuosity, Nothing leſs is requisite than the vigorous & commanding Principle of Duty, ~~directed by the shining light of Instruction~~.

The first Principles of morals, into which all moral ~~Reasoning~~ Argumentation may be resolved, are ~~[illegible]~~ discovered in a Manner more analogous to the Perceptions of Sense than to the Conclusions of Reasoning.

In Morality, however, as well as in other Sciences, Reason is usefully introduced, & performs many important Services. In many Instances she regulates our Belief; & in many Instances she regulates our Conduct: She determines ~~in~~ the proper Means to any End; & she decides the Preference of one End over another. She may exhibit an Object to the mind; tho' the Perception which the Mind has, when once the Object is exhibited, may properly belong to a Sense. She may be necessary to ascertain the Circumstances & determine the Motives to an Action; tho' it be the moral Sense that perceives the Action

to be either *virtuous* or *vicious*, after it's Motive & it's Circumstances have been discovered. She discerns the Tendencies of the several Senses, Affections & Actions, & the comparative Value of Objects & Gratifications. She judges concerning [illegible] *subordinate Ends*; but concerning *ultimate* Ends ~~Reason~~ she is not employed. These we prosecute by some *immediate Determination* of the Mind, which, in the Order of Action*, is prior to all Reasoning; for no Opinion or Judgment can move to Action, where there is not a previous Desire of some End — This Power of comparing the several Enjoyments, of which our Nature is susceptible, in order to discover which are most important to our Happineſs; ~~& the Power of arriving, by Reason, to the knowledge of a governing Mind, whose moral Administration presides over the World, are~~ is of the highest Consequence & Neceſsity to corroborate our *moral* Faculty, & to preserve our Affections in just

Rank & regular Order.

A Magistrate knows that it is his Duty to promote the Good of the Commonwealth which has entrusted him with Authority. But whether one particular ~~Scheme~~ Plan or another particular ~~Scheme~~ Plan of Conduct in Office may best promote the Good of the Commonwealth may in many Cases be doubtful. His Conscience or moral Sense determines the End, which he ought to pursue; & he has intuitive Evidence that his End is good: But the Means of attaining this End must be determined by Reason. To select & ascertain those Means, is often a Matter of very considerable Difficulty; Doubts may arise; opposite Interests may occur; & a Preference must be given to one Side, from a small Overbalance, & from very nice Views. This is particularly the Case in Questions with Regard to Justice—If every single Instance of Justice, like every single Instance of Benevolence, were pleasing & useful to Society

the Case would be more simple, & would be seldom liable to great Controversy. But as single Instances of Justice are often pernicious in their first & immediate Tendency; & as the Advantage to Society results only from the Observance of the general Rule & from the Concurrence & Combination of several Persons in the same equitable Conduct; the Case here becomes more intricate & involved. The various Circumstances of Society; the various Consequences of any Practice; the various Interests, which may be proposed; are, all, on many Occasions, doubtful, & subject to much Discussion and Inquiry. The Design of municipal Law (for let us still, from every Direction ~~[illegible]~~, open a View to our principal object the central Object of these Lectures) the Design of municipal Law is to fix all the Questions which ~~with~~ Regard ~~to~~ Justice: ~~The Reflexions of Politicians, the Precedents of History & public Records are all directed to the same Purpose.~~ ~~And~~ A very accurate Reason or Judgment is often requisite, to give the true Determination amidst ~~such~~ intricate Doubts, arising from obscure or opposite Utilities.

Thus

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[to N° 4.]

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